

PERCEIVED CONTRIBUTIONS OF UKULELE ENSEMBLE LEARNING TO PEACE-LOVING CHARACTER: A QUALITATIVE REANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Peace-oriented character education requires school practices in which students repeatedly enact cooperation, emotional regulation, respect, and non-discrimination. This article presents a secondary qualitative reanalysis of an archival field report on ukulele learning in a public junior high school in Ambon, Indonesia. The available corpus comprised reported interview responses from six informants—the principal, one music teacher, and four students—originally collected on 7–8 May 2025; no new participant contact occurred, and undocumented observation references were treated only as contextual description. All available excerpts were anonymized by role, coded for meaning units, compared across informant groups, and interpreted through peace-education, music-education, and locally situated pedagogy literature. Participants associated ukulele learning with four interconnected processes: disciplined and constructive engagement; cooperation, peer assistance, and non-discrimination during ensemble work; local cultural belonging and heritage interest; and sharing practices prompted by unequal access to instruments. The findings support a provisional pedagogical-ecology model in which structured rehearsal, teacher modeling, peer interdependence, local meaning, and equitable access jointly shape perceived character learning. The evidence does not demonstrate causal behavioral change because the archival report lacked raw transcripts, systematic observations, comparison data, and verified ethics documentation. Schools may use the model as a design proposition rather than a proven intervention. Future research should employ prospective multisite designs, direct observation, broader participant groups, and documented consent procedures.

Keywords: ensemble learning, locally situated pedagogy, music education, peace-loving character, qualitative reanalysis

INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, much research has focused on the capacity of schools to develop social, emotional, and ethical competencies alongside academic achievement. This emphasis reflects a recognition that education is not only a process of knowledge transmission but also a public institution through which young people learn how to cooperate, regulate conflict, recognize human dignity, and participate responsibly in diverse communities. Meta-analytic evidence indicates that well-designed school-based social and emotional learning can improve social behavior, emotional competencies, and longer-term developmental outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017). Music-education research likewise suggests that social-emotional outcomes are more credible when they are intentionally embedded in structured instruction rather than treated as automatic by-products of participation (Çenberci & Tufan, 2025). Character education similarly emphasizes intentional school cultures, adult modeling, opportunities for moral action, and coherent practices rather than isolated moral messages (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). Within this broader agenda, peace education seeks to develop the knowledge, dispositions, and practical competencies required to prevent violence, address injustice, communicate across difference, and build constructive relationships (Harris, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Page, 2004).

The need for peace-oriented character education is particularly salient during early adolescence. Junior high school students encounter rapid emotional, relational, and identity development, while peer affiliation and school climate strongly shape how they manage disagreement and belonging. A peace-loving character in this study does not denote passive

avoidance of conflict. It refers to observable and teachable dispositions such as calm emotional expression, respect, tolerance, cooperation, care for peers, non-discrimination, willingness to help, discipline, and commitment to nonviolent interaction. Peace education is therefore most credible when students repeatedly enact such dispositions in authentic social tasks, rather than merely reciting values. Johnson and Johnson (2005) argue that peace education depends on constructive controversy, cooperation, and conflict-resolution competence; Bajaj (2015) likewise stresses pedagogies that connect critical reflection with lived practice. These perspectives invite attention to school activities in which interdependence, listening, turn-taking, and collective responsibility are structurally embedded.

Music education provides one such context. Music is simultaneously aesthetic, embodied, emotional, cultural, and social. Its educational influence extends beyond technical proficiency because learners must attend to timing, coordinate actions, listen to others, tolerate errors, and contribute to a common outcome. Reviews have associated sustained music participation with intellectual, personal, and social development, while emphasizing that outcomes depend on pedagogical quality and context (Hallam, 2010; MacDonald, 2013). Experimental and quasi-experimental studies have reported relationships between joint music-making and cooperation, affiliation, empathy, prosociality, social competence, and self-esteem (Good & Russo, 2016; Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010; Rabinowitch et al., 2013; Rickard et al., 2013). Interpersonal synchrony is a plausible mechanism: coordinated movement or sound can heighten perceived unity and willingness to cooperate (Hove & Risen, 2009; Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009). Meta-analytic, developmental, and theoretical work further indicates that synchrony and musical coordination can support affiliation and prosociality, while their effects vary with group structure, social framing, and musical context (Cirelli, 2018; Mogan et al., 2017; Savage et al., 2021; Stupacher et al., 2017; Tarr et al., 2014). Singing and ensemble activities may also accelerate social bonding across diverse groups (Pearce et al., 2015).

However, the evidence is neither automatic nor uniformly positive. Controlled field research has found that brief musical synchronization does not always produce measurable prosocial effects among children (Baier et al., 2021). Group music training has also shown conditional or null effects depending on duration, instructional design, baseline differences, and the measures used (Schellenberg et al., 2015). Ilari et al. (2021) found complex associations between musical activities, prosocial behavior, and executive function, reinforcing the need to avoid simple claims that music itself causes moral development. A recent systematic review similarly emphasizes that music-related social bonding and emotion regulation are strongly context-dependent (Chu & Tsai, 2026). The educational question is therefore not whether music is inherently good, but how particular musical practices, relationships, cultural meanings, and access arrangements create or restrict opportunities for character learning.

This question becomes more important when music education is grounded in local culture. Culturally responsive music pedagogy treats learners' cultural knowledge and community repertoires as intellectual and ethical resources rather than decorative additions to a standardized curriculum (Abril, 2013). Decolonizing perspectives similarly warn against tokenism and call for sustained engagement with local musical practices, histories, power relations, and knowledge holders (Hess, 2015). Research with early adolescents also indicates that culturally diverse music curricula can strengthen intercultural sensitivity when cultural encounter and reflection are explicit components of instruction (Mellizo, 2019). Local instruments can support cultural continuity and learner identification, but their educational value depends on whether they are taught through respectful, participatory, and critically reflective practices. When students recognize an instrument as part of their community's cultural landscape, musical participation may connect personal discipline and peer cooperation with a larger responsibility to preserve shared heritage.

Ambon provides a distinctive setting for examining these relationships. The city joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of music in 2019, and local policy subsequently formalized music as local curricular content in basic education (Ambon City Government, 2020; UNESCO, 2019). Research on Ambon as a music creative city has also emphasized the interconnected roles of government, artists, educational institutions, and arts communities (Pattipeilohy et al., 2022). Music in Maluku carries particular significance in a social environment shaped by memories of communal conflict and continuing reconciliation. Research on Pela Gandong and local peacebuilding demonstrates that cultural traditions can provide relational languages for solidarity, reconciliation, and social cohesion (Fikri & Hasudungan, 2021; Hartimah et al., 2021; Hasudungan et al., 2019). Ukulele practice is not equated with Pela Gandong or treated as an established conflict-resolution tradition; rather, it is examined as one locally meaningful school activity through which participants described togetherness, discipline, and cultural continuity.

An archival field report from SMP Negeri 15 Ambon documents that music learning had been institutionalized since 2021 and that the school participated in the city's music-school initiative. The report describes curricular or extracurricular ukulele activity intended to sustain musical interest and cultural knowledge, while also identifying uneven encouragement and unequal access to instruments. Because the archival material does not describe repertoire, language of instruction, community musician involvement, or the cultural backgrounds of participating students, this article uses the more cautious term locally situated music pedagogy rather than claiming that every criterion of culturally responsive pedagogy was empirically demonstrated.

Research Problem and Gap

Despite substantial literature on music, prosociality, and student development, two limitations remain. First, experimental and school-based studies frequently measure outcomes after music participation but provide less explanation of how students and educators interpret the daily moral significance of rehearsal, helping, instrument sharing, and local cultural meaning. Second, research on peace education in Ambon has concentrated more strongly on historical reconciliation, local wisdom, and civic-cultural frameworks than on the micro-practices of school music learning (Fikri & Hasudungan, 2021; Hasudungan et al., 2019). The present archival reanalysis addresses this interpretive gap while explicitly avoiding causal claims.

A second unresolved problem concerns causal overstatement. Positive associations between music and prosocial outcomes can be produced by several overlapping factors: supportive teachers, self-selection by motivated students, the novelty of activities, increased time in supervised settings, peer belonging, or the explicit norms attached to an ensemble. A credible qualitative inquiry should therefore identify the mechanisms participants perceive, while treating those perceptions as situated evidence rather than proof of direct causal impact. The general solution is a bounded case analysis that compares the perspectives of school leadership, the music teacher, and students and interprets their accounts against international music-education and peace-education scholarship.

A further problem is distributive. Character-oriented activities can reproduce exclusion when participation depends on family purchasing power. The archival report indicates that instrument scarcity and household economic circumstances limited individual access to ukuleles. Fairness, mutual care, and non-discrimination therefore cannot be treated as outcomes separate from program design; they must also be visible in the distribution of time, instruments, and legitimate participation roles.

Analytical and Pedagogical Perspective

Scientific literature suggests four complementary strategies. First, peace education should organize cooperative interdependence and provide explicit opportunities to practice communication, perspective taking, and constructive responses to difference (Harris, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Second, music instruction should emphasize sustained joint activity rather than passive exposure. Long-term group interaction appears more likely than brief interventions to support empathy and social competence because students repeatedly negotiate coordination, responsibility, and feedback (Rabinowitch et al., 2013; Rickard et al., 2013). Third, culturally responsive pedagogy should connect musical technique with local meanings, identities, and community knowledge (Abril, 2013; Hess, 2015). Fourth, inclusive implementation should reduce access barriers and prevent instrument ownership from determining belonging. These strategies frame ukulele ensemble learning as a designed social practice, not as an instrument-centered intervention.

The relevant literature also supports careful attention to emotional regulation and aggression. Music-based interventions can offer structured channels for emotional expression and may reduce aggressive behavior in children and adolescents, although effect sizes and designs vary (Ye et al., 2021). Musical participation has been associated with well-being and prosocial development, but systematic reviews emphasize heterogeneity, contextual dependence, and the need for stronger designs (Martí-Vilar et al., 2023; Wu & Lu, 2021). Accordingly, the present study interprets calmness, discipline, cooperation, and peer care as participant-reported and observed manifestations of peace-loving character, while avoiding claims that the case establishes clinical or causal effects.

Focused Literature Review and Research Gap

The literature progressively narrows to a specific gap. Experimental studies explain that synchrony can increase affiliation and cooperation (Hove & Risen, 2009; Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009), child-development studies show that joint music-making may encourage helping and empathy (Cirelli et al., 2014; Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010; Rabinowitch et al., 2013), and school studies connect expanded music participation with social competence and life skills (Bussu & Mangiarulo, 2024; Rickard et al., 2013). Yet negative or conditional findings demonstrate that synchronization alone is insufficient (Baier et al., 2021; Schellenberg et al., 2015). Culturally responsive scholarship clarifies that repertoire and community relevance matter (Abril, 2013; Hess, 2015), while peace-education scholarship clarifies the ethical and relational outcomes that matter (Bajaj, 2015; Harris, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2005). What is missing is an integrated, context-sensitive account of how a locally meaningful, accessible ensemble instrument is enacted as peace-loving character education, including the institutional supports and inequities that shape participation.

The reanalysis links three bodies of scholarship that are often discussed separately: music-based prosocial development, locally situated music education, and school-based peace education in a post-conflict island context. Its specific contribution is a provisional pedagogical-ecology proposition: participants' accounts suggest that character-related meanings arise through the interaction of structured engagement, ensemble interdependence, teacher framing, local cultural belonging, and distributive access. This proposition is an analytical synthesis generated from the archival evidence and relevant literature; it is not a tested causal model.

Peace-Loving Character: Construct and Analytical Dimensions

Peace education encompasses knowledge about violence and justice, skills for conflict transformation, and dispositions that sustain respectful coexistence (Harris, 2004; Page, 2004). For this reanalysis, peace-loving character is operationalized through three analytical

dimensions. Intrapersonal regulation includes calm emotional expression, discipline, persistence, and management of frustration. Relational conduct includes listening, cooperation, tolerance, helping, sharing, and non-discrimination. Participatory justice concerns whether students receive equitable access, attention, voice, and legitimate ensemble roles. This structure prevents the construct from becoming an undifferentiated list of positive qualities and clarifies that cultural pride or heritage interest is a contextual meaning rather than, by itself, proof of peace-loving character.

This enacted view also guards against a moralizing curriculum that defines peace as obedience. Critical peace education asks learners to examine unequal conditions and participate in changing them (Bajaj, 2015). Instrument access is therefore analytically relevant: peer lending can express care and recognition, but it cannot substitute for institutional responsibility to provide equitable participation. The framework consequently evaluates both interpersonal behavior and the material arrangements within which that behavior occurs.

Musical Synchrony, Cooperation, and Emotional Development

Joint music-making requires temporal coordination and reciprocal attention. Studies of synchrony show that moving or performing in time can increase perceived affiliation and cooperation (Hove & Risen, 2009; Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009). In young children, joint music-making has been linked to helping and collaborative behavior (Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010), and interpersonal synchrony has increased prosocial responses even in infancy (Cirelli et al., 2014). Singing can promote cooperation in diverse groups and accelerate social bonding (Good & Russo, 2016; Pearce et al., 2015). Longer-term musical interaction may also support empathy because ensemble members repeatedly predict, attend to, and adapt to one another (Rabinowitch et al., 2013).

School-based evidence nevertheless requires qualification. Expanded music classes have been associated with social competence and self-esteem (Rickard et al., 2013), and ensemble participation may strengthen adolescents' perceived life skills (Bussu & Mangiarulo, 2024). Yet some controlled studies have found no direct effect of synchronization on prosocial behavior (Baier et al., 2021), while group music training has yielded mixed results (Schellenberg et al., 2015). These differences indicate that duration, pedagogy, group norms, measurement, and learner characteristics moderate outcomes. The present study therefore attends to the processes participants identify: supervised engagement, rehearsal discipline, helping, emotional calm, cultural pride, and shared responsibility.

Locally Situated Music Pedagogy and Peacebuilding

Culturally responsive music education seeks continuity between school learning and students' cultural worlds and requires evidence that instruction recognizes learners' identities, community knowledge, and diverse musical practices (Abril, 2013). Decolonizing music education further cautions against token representation and the uncritical labeling of instruments as authentic or traditional (Hess, 2015). The archival corpus demonstrates local pride, curricular recognition, and an interest in preservation, but it does not document repertoire selection, multiple student cultural positions, community knowledge holders, or family meanings. The empirical claim is therefore limited to locally situated and culturally connected music learning.

Local peacebuilding research in Ambon demonstrates that cultural frameworks can sustain reconciliation and social connection. Pela Gandong has been examined as a resource for peace education, social reconciliation, and culturally grounded governance (Fikri & Hasudungan, 2021; Hartimah et al., 2021; Hasudungan et al., 2019). This scholarship supports a place-responsive interpretation of music learning: cultural participation may strengthen peace when

it becomes a shared practice of recognition, reciprocity, and responsibility. The analytical framework used in this study therefore links musical structure, pedagogical relations, cultural meaning, and distributive access.

Provisional pedagogical-ecology framework. The analysis connects five elements: structured rehearsal organizes time and attention; ensemble interdependence requires listening and coordination; teacher modeling attaches ethical language to practice; local cultural meaning supports belonging and heritage interest; and access arrangements determine whether participation is equitable. The framework predicts no automatic effect of music. Instead, it proposes that peace-related meanings become more plausible when these elements operate together and when exclusionary conditions are actively addressed.

Purpose, Contribution, and Scope

The purpose of this secondary qualitative reanalysis was to examine how school actors associated ukulele ensemble learning with peace-loving character and how they described the supports, barriers, and responses surrounding implementation. The analysis addressed two questions: what character-related meanings the principal, music teacher, and students attached to ukulele learning; and what institutional and material conditions they described as enabling or constraining participation.

The scholarly contribution lies in formalizing a provisional pedagogical-ecology model that distinguishes participant-reported evidence from author interpretation. The model treats peace-loving character as three connected dimensions: intrapersonal regulation (calmness, discipline, and management of frustration); relational conduct (cooperation, tolerance, assistance, sharing, and non-discrimination); and participatory justice (equitable opportunities, access, and recognition). Local cultural belonging is treated as a contextual resource that may motivate participation and collective responsibility, not as direct evidence of peaceful behavior. The scope is limited to one archival field report, one school, six informants, and the one-month field period documented in that report. The findings are therefore interpretive and potentially transferable to comparable cases, but they are neither statistically generalizable nor evidence of behavioral effectiveness.

METHOD

Research Design and Data Provenance

This article employed a secondary qualitative reanalysis of an archival field report rather than a new primary case study. The original report documented fieldwork conducted from 29 April to 29 May 2025 at one public junior high school in Ambon and reproduced interview responses from school actors. The present analysis used only the text available in that report; the analysts did not conduct the original interviews, did not contact participants, and did not have access to audio files, verbatim transcripts, or a complete observation archive. The bounded analytical case was therefore the reported discourse about ukulele learning and peace-loving character within this school context.

The unit of analysis was each reported response and its relationship to the two question domains in the archival document. Statements such as 'music creates peace' were treated as participant perceptions and were disaggregated into more specific processes, including supervised engagement, rehearsal discipline, emotional calm, peer cooperation, cultural pride, instrument sharing, and access constraints. The reanalysis does not estimate treatment effects or claim that the reported practices caused behavioral change.

Archived Informants and Case Boundaries

The archival report contained responses attributed to six informants: the principal (P1), one music teacher (T1), and four students (S1–S4). P1 contributed institutional accounts concerning program purpose, discipline, conflict-related concerns, school support, and resource barriers. T1 described pedagogical practice, cooperation, cultural preservation, instrument scarcity, and peer lending. S1 discussed local music knowledge, peer assistance, and financial access; S2 described enjoyment, calmness, non-discrimination, and requests for school support; S3 emphasized collaboration, cohesion, and a supportive friendship environment; and S4 discussed skill development and benefits to others. The report did not preserve a sampling rationale, eligibility criteria, recruitment procedures, refusal information, ages, grade levels, gender composition, participation frequency, instrument ownership profiles, or the size of the wider music program. These omissions are retained as limitations rather than reconstructed.

The original report selected the school because it had a music-oriented curriculum and ukulele learning within Ambon's wider music-city context. The case is analytically relevant because music had formal institutional visibility while participation was constrained by uneven instrument access. Student names appearing in the archival report were replaced with role codes S1–S4. The role-coded descriptions reported here include only information that can be verified from the available document.

Archived Data Sources and Question Domains

The archival field report stated that semi-structured interviews were used and reproduced responses organized around two domains: perceived contributions of ukulele learning to peace-loving character, and school efforts, supports, barriers, and responses. Student and teacher responses were dated 7 May 2025, and the principal's responses were dated 8 May 2025. The report did not document interview duration, interview language, setting, interviewer identity, recording method, transcription protocol, or whether all participants received identical prompts. These absent details limit reproducibility and are not inferred here.

The available interview prompts functioned as the inherited instrument for the reanalysis. Although the archival report mentioned observation and included a school-environment image, it did not provide an observation schedule, field-note excerpts, duration, behavioral records, or episode-level descriptions. Observation was therefore treated as contextual background only and was not used as corroborating or triangulating evidence. No documentary source beyond the archival report was analyzed.

Secondary Thematic Reanalysis

The secondary analysis followed a transparent, literature-informed thematic procedure. First, every available reported response was copied into a matrix and labeled by role, date, question domain, and source paragraph. Second, meaning units were assigned open codes, including constructive engagement, rehearsal discipline, emotional calm, cooperation, peer assistance, non-discrimination, cultural belonging, instrument scarcity, borrowing, and stakeholder support. Third, codes were compared across P1, T1, and S1–S4 to identify convergence, role-specific emphasis, and limiting evidence. Fourth, related codes were grouped into candidate themes and checked against the complete available corpus. Fifth, the themes were interpreted through the three analytical dimensions of peace-loving character and the literature on music, peace education, and participation equity. The analysis was completed manually; no independent second coder, member checking, or participant validation was possible because the study used an archival report.

Four provisional themes resulted: structured musical participation as constructive engagement; ensemble interdependence as relational practice; local cultural belonging as a contextual

resource; and access inequity as both a constraint and a test of participatory justice. Figure 1 summarizes the actual reanalysis workflow and explicitly distinguishes the available corpus from procedures that were not documented.

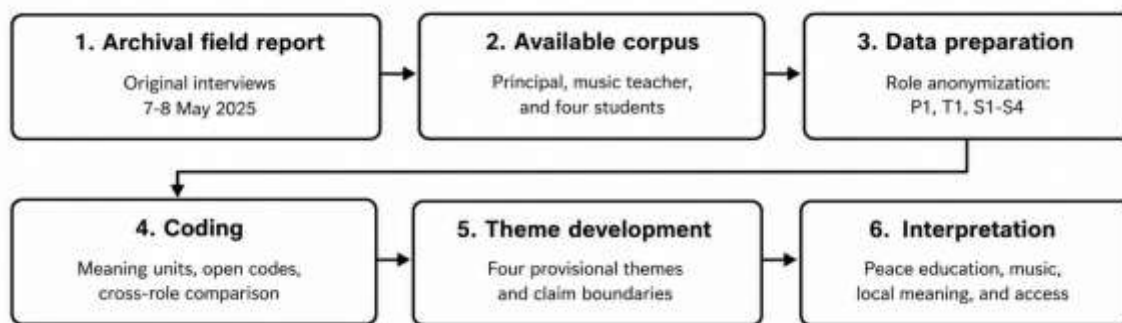


Figure 1. Study-specific workflow for the archival qualitative reanalysis

Trustworthiness, Reflexivity, Ethics, and Data Governance

Credibility was pursued through source comparison rather than claimed triangulation: the analysis compared accounts from P1, T1, and S1–S4 and retained constraints, alternative explanations, and unfavorable implications such as unequal access. The role-question-code-theme matrix provides a traceable evidentiary chain from reported text to interpretation. Reflexive restraint was applied by treating the analysis as literature-informed, distinguishing direct participant claims from author synthesis, and avoiding causal language. No member checking, peer debriefing, independent coding, or raw-data audit was available; consequently, trustworthiness rests on transparent use of the complete archival corpus and clear reporting of its limits.

The archival report did not preserve verifiable information on institutional ethics approval, school authorization, parental or guardian consent, student assent, withdrawal rights, permission to reproduce quotations, data storage, retention, or destruction. No new interaction with participants occurred in this secondary reanalysis, and all student names were replaced with role codes. Quotations were minimally edited for English readability while retaining substantive meaning. Publication should remain contingent on the authors supplying the original authorization and consent documentation or obtaining an editor-approved ethics determination appropriate to the archival status of the material. Because the participants included minors, the underlying raw data are not presented as openly shareable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The archival evidence indicates how participants interpreted ukulele learning; it does not establish behavioral effects. The combined Results and Discussion section therefore distinguishes (a) role-coded empirical statements, (b) analytical interpretation, and (c) comparison with literature. Table 1 presents the four provisional themes, representative evidence, the relevant character dimension, and the principal boundary of each claim.

Table 1. Thematic synthesis with representative archival evidence and claim boundaries

Theme	Representative archival evidence	Analytical dimension	Boundary of the claim
Structured musical participation	P1 linked scheduled music with keeping students in appropriate activity and described repeated training as strengthening discipline; S2 said the music could bring “calm and peace.”	Intrapersonal regulation and constructive engagement	Perception-based evidence; no behavioral baseline, disciplinary record, or comparison activity.
Ensemble interdependence	T1 described collaboration and togetherness; S1 reported helping peers who had difficulty; S2 rejected discrimination; S3 emphasized mutual support and friendship.	Relational conduct: cooperation, tolerance, assistance, and recognition	No detailed interactional observation; dominant voices, disagreement, and non-participant experiences were not recorded.
Local cultural belonging	T1 described the ukulele as a source of cultural identity and pride; students referred to knowing and preserving music from their own region.	Contextual resource for belonging and collective responsibility	The report did not document repertoire, community knowledge holders, cultural diversity, or contested meanings.
Access inequity and institutional response	P1, T1, S1, and S2 identified insufficient instruments or household finances; lending and stakeholder support were proposed.	Participatory justice and equitable belonging	Peer lending is an interim practice, not evidence that access was equitable or institutionally guaranteed.

Structured Musical Participation as Preventive Peace Infrastructure

Empirical evidence. P1 described scheduled music as a supervised alternative to activities considered inappropriate and stated that repeated training made students 'more disciplined and stronger.' T1 associated school music with emotional intelligence, discipline, cooperation, and social skills. S2 explained that the music entertained students and could 'bring calm and peace.' These statements support a participant-perceived relationship between structured rehearsal, attention, discipline, and emotional calm; they do not demonstrate that fights or aggression declined.

Interpretation. The cross-role similarity supports a cautious interpretation of music learning as micro-level preventive infrastructure: an arrangement of time, adult guidance, expectations, and shared activity that participants believed made constructive engagement more likely. The evidence is strongest for perceived routine, supervision, and emotional experience, not for

measured conflict reduction. This distinction aligns the claim with the archival and non-comparative design.

The emotional account is also consistent with research describing music as a medium for mood regulation, well-being, and socially acceptable expression (MacDonald, 2013). A meta-analysis found that music-based interventions can reduce aggressive behavior among children and adolescents, although the included interventions, populations, and outcome measures were heterogeneous (Ye et al., 2021). The present case offers a contextual mechanism for such outcomes: calmness may be supported by focused sensorimotor activity, predictable rehearsal, enjoyable participation, and membership in a supervised group. Yet the data do not establish that aggression decreased. No disciplinary records, pre-post measures, comparison group, or systematic behavioral observations were reported. The responsible conclusion is that participants perceived ukulele activity as calming and protective, and that their explanations are theoretically plausible.

An alternative interpretation is that any engaging extracurricular activity under supportive adult supervision could produce similar effects. Sports, drama, visual arts, or community service might likewise occupy students constructively and cultivate discipline. The distinctive contribution of music lies in the additional requirement of temporal coordination and attentive listening. Ensemble members cannot achieve a coherent performance if they ignore one another. This feature gives rehearsal an inherently relational structure, but its moral significance depends on teacher framing. A punitive or competitive rehearsal could increase anxiety and exclusion; a cooperative rehearsal can make discipline compatible with care. The source evidence suggests the latter orientation because the teacher emphasized coaching, modeling, curiosity, and mutual support.

The finding therefore refines broad claims about the 'power of music.' The case suggests that school actors perceived music as supporting peace-related character when it was sustained, supervised, enjoyable, and relational. This conditional wording is more defensible than attributing effects to exposure or to the instrument itself. A practical proposition for future testing is to make rehearsal norms explicit—listening before responding, accepting mistakes, regulating frustration, and repairing coordination after breakdown.

Synchrony, Peer Care, and Cooperative Learning

Empirical evidence. T1 stated that the activity encouraged students to collaborate and create togetherness. S1 described caring for peers who found the instrument difficult; S2 said students should not discriminate against classmates who wanted to learn; and S3 emphasized mutual support and a positive friendship environment. The reported practice of lending instruments added a material form of peer assistance. These excerpts ground the theme in helping, inclusion, coordination, and recognition rather than in a generalized claim that music automatically produces empathy.

Interpretation. Research on musical synchrony provides one plausible account because coordinated performance requires reciprocal attention and adjustment (Hove & Risen, 2009; Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009). However, the archival report did not describe rehearsal episodes in sufficient detail to show how timing, correction, leadership, or disagreement unfolded. The claim is therefore that participants attached cooperative meaning to ensemble work, while the proposed mechanism of synchrony remains theoretically informed and requires prospective observation.

This theme also connects with cooperative learning theory in peace education. Positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, social skills, and group processing are relevant analytical criteria (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). The archival text supports positive interdependence and peer assistance but provides little evidence about

accountability, role distribution, or group reflection. Rotating roles, peer-tutoring protocols, and brief post-rehearsal reflection should therefore be treated as design propositions for future implementation rather than as practices already verified in this case.

The result is consistent with Bussu and Mangiarulo's (2024) finding that ensemble experience can strengthen adolescents' perceived life skills, and with Rickard et al. (2013), who associated increased school music with social competence and self-esteem. It is also compatible with reviews connecting musical training to empathy and prosocial behavior (Wu & Lu, 2021). Nonetheless, counterevidence matters. Baier et al. (2021) found no prosocial effect of interpersonal musical synchronization in a controlled field experiment, and Schellenberg et al. (2015) reported conditional outcomes for group music training. These studies warn against treating synchrony as a sufficient cause. In the present case, the more compelling mechanism is synchrony plus pedagogical norms plus repeated relationships plus cultural relevance.

A further interpretation concerns recognition. Students who lend an instrument or guide a beginner acknowledge that the peer belongs in the ensemble despite unequal resources or skill. This is a small but meaningful practice of non-discrimination. Peace education often appears ambitious when framed at the level of global conflict, yet its school-level foundation is the daily distribution of attention, patience, voice, and opportunity. Ukulele learning offered a social situation in which such distributions became visible. The practical implication is that teachers should intentionally document and discuss these acts. A brief post-rehearsal reflection—who helped, how disagreement was resolved, and whether everyone could participate—can connect musical success with ethical learning.

The data also reveal that cooperation was valued not only instrumentally, as a means to a better performance, but morally, as a way to become a good person. The teacher's statement that students should care for one another and the students' rejection of discrimination show that ensemble norms had begun to acquire ethical language. This transition from coordination to moral meaning is central to the study's contribution. It explains why the same activity can be mere skill training in one context and character education in another.

Cultural Identity as a Moral Resource

Empirical evidence. T1 described the ukulele as connected with cultural identity and pride in Maluku and emphasized preservation through younger generations. S1 and S2 referred to learning music from their own region and continuing to know or preserve it. P1 situated the activity within the school's music-school initiative. These statements demonstrate local cultural belonging and heritage interest; they do not independently establish culturally responsive pedagogy or peaceful behavior.

Interpretation. Culturally responsive music education offers a useful but demanding benchmark. The archival evidence confirms local recognition, repeated learning, and teacher support, yet it does not show how multiple student identities, family meanings, community musicians, language, or repertoire were incorporated. The present case is therefore described as locally situated and culturally connected. Cultural meaning may motivate persistence and collective responsibility, but its relationship to peace-loving character should be treated as contextual and interpretive.

The Ambon context deepens this significance. The city's membership in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and local music-curriculum regulation give music public visibility (Ambon City Government, 2020; UNESCO, 2019). More importantly, Maluku's post-conflict environment makes relational culture a central educational concern. Research on Pela Gandong demonstrates how local wisdom can support social reconciliation and peacebuilding (Fikri & Hasudungan, 2021; Hartimah et al., 2021; Hasudungan et al., 2019). The ukulele is not presented here as equivalent to Pela Gandong or as a direct conflict-resolution tradition. Rather,

the case indicates that school music can inhabit a broader cultural ecology in which togetherness, shared identity, and peaceful coexistence are publicly valued.

One explanation for the participants' positive response is that local cultural meaning increases identification with the learning task. Students may be more willing to persist when they perceive the activity as 'ours' and when school participation confirms that community knowledge deserves academic space. Cultural pride can also support collective self-respect after histories of conflict or marginalization. Yet pride must remain inclusive. Ambon and Maluku are culturally and religiously diverse, and a school may include students with different relationships to any particular instrument. Culturally responsive pedagogy should therefore invite multiple narratives: how families understand the ukulele, how its local use has changed, and how it relates to other musical traditions. This prevents heritage education from becoming a fixed or exclusionary identity claim.

The theme extends the discussion of character education by showing how participants attached moral significance to place and shared heritage. This is an author interpretation built from their accounts, not a separate behavioral outcome. Future curricula could test whether inquiry into local music history, dialogue with community musicians, and student reflection on coexistence deepen both cultural understanding and relational conduct. Such activities should be evaluated rather than assumed to be culturally responsive.

At the policy level, the result supports local content curricula but also sets a quality condition. Mandating music does not guarantee culturally responsive education. Schools need prepared teachers, adequate instruments, locally credible learning materials, and partnerships with artists and communities. Policy evaluation should assess whether students experience meaningful participation and ethical reflection, not only whether a timetable includes a music subject.

Access Inequity, Sharing, and Institutional Responsibility

Empirical evidence. P1, T1, S1, and S2 consistently identified limited instruments or household finances as barriers. T1 avoided requiring every student to purchase an instrument and described borrowing as an immediate response. S1 explicitly referred to lack of funds, while S2 asked the school to pay attention to students without access. The same corpus therefore records both peer sharing and an unresolved institutional inequity.

This finding is theoretically important because peace education concerns both relationships and justice. Peer sharing demonstrates solidarity, yet a program that routinely depends on the generosity of instrument owners can preserve unequal power. Students without instruments may receive less practice time, feel indebted, or remain peripheral. Critical peace education requires institutions to identify and reduce such structural barriers (Bajaj, 2015). The school's response should therefore combine immediate relational strategies with long-term distributive measures. Immediate measures include instrument rotation, paired practice, school-owned loan sets, and maintenance protocols. Long-term measures include budget allocation, partnerships with local government and music communities, donations governed by transparent criteria, and integration of access targets into program evaluation.

The access issue also clarifies the meaning of inclusion. A music program can be formally open to all while substantively favoring students whose families can purchase instruments or provide practice space. Equitable participation means that every student receives sufficient time, instructional attention, and a legitimate role in performance. This principle should guide scheduling and assessment. Technical grades should not be confounded with private access; teachers may need to provide school practice periods and assess growth relative to opportunity.

The participants' accounts show that instrument lending already functioned as character practice. Students learned that individual ownership could serve a collective purpose. This

supports the study's argument that peace-loving character emerges through arrangements of interdependence. Nevertheless, the ethical lesson should not be that disadvantaged students must rely indefinitely on peers. Institutional provision converts charity into rights-based inclusion. The most robust model would retain sharing as a cooperative norm while guaranteeing a minimum instrument-to-student ratio.

Selection uncertainty is especially important for this theme. The archival report does not indicate whether S1–S4 represented students with different participation frequencies, skill levels, or ownership conditions, and it contains no accounts from students who disengaged or did not participate. The positive interpretation may therefore reflect the voices of students already willing to discuss the program. Transferability requires prospective sampling that includes frequent, irregular, and non-participants as well as parents and staff responsible for financing.

Integrated Interpretation, Contributions, and Implications

Across the four themes, the findings support a provisional pedagogical-ecology model rather than a demonstrated causal pathway. Structured rehearsal organizes time and attention; ensemble interdependence creates opportunities for helping and inclusion; teacher framing connects musical practice with ethical language; local cultural meaning supports belonging; and access arrangements determine who can participate equitably. Peace-loving character is therefore interpreted as a possible emergent meaning of the whole learning ecology, not as an inherent effect of the ukulele.

The contribution is threefold. First, the article separates participant-reported processes from causal outcome claims and shows how discipline, calmness, and peer assistance were narrated within one locally situated program. Second, it integrates local cultural meaning as a contextual resource rather than treating heritage preservation as direct proof of peace. Third, it positions distributive access as a constitutive condition of peace-oriented pedagogy. These elements form a provisional model for later testing; they should not be read as effects established by the six-informant archival corpus.

Provisional implications for teachers. The evidence and literature together suggest testing cooperative rather than parallel individual practice, mixed-ability groupings, rotating roles, respectful peer feedback, and short reflection prompts that identify helping, listening, inclusion, and responses to mistakes. These are design propositions extrapolated from the participants' accounts and cooperative-learning literature, not practices directly evaluated in the archival case.

Provisional implications for school leaders. The access theme justifies attention to protected rehearsal time, school-owned instruments, repair and storage, and transparent allocation. Future program evaluation could examine participation equity, belonging, and school-climate indicators alongside performance quality. Because the present study did not analyze budgets, disciplinary records, or implementation outcomes, these recommendations require local feasibility assessment and prospective evaluation.

Provisional policy implications. Local curriculum guidance may explicitly connect music learning with cooperation, cultural plurality, nonviolent communication, and equitable access. Partnerships with Ambon's creative-city network could be explored for teacher learning, instrument provision, and community engagement. These proposals extend beyond the single archival case and should therefore be framed as policy options for pilot testing rather than as established solutions.

The scarcity theme also reveals an analytical tension: borrowing created opportunities for care, but continued dependence on private owners could reproduce unequal power and practice

time. This does not justify scarcity. It suggests that future programs can retain collective stewardship while converting access from discretionary charity into an institutional entitlement.

Several limitations constrain the conclusions. The corpus came from one archival school report and six informants, four of whom were students. Sampling, recruitment, interview duration, language, recording, transcription, complete observation procedures, and formal ethics documentation were not available. The reanalysis relied on reported and translated excerpts rather than raw transcripts; no independent coder, member checking, or direct behavioral observation was possible. Data covered one month and did not include parents, non-participants, comparison activities, disciplinary records, attendance, school-climate measures, or detailed rehearsal episodes. Social desirability, institutional loyalty, selective inclusion of favorable respondents, and theory-informed coding may all have shaped the themes. The study therefore offers an auditable interpretation of available discourse, not causal, prevalence, or effectiveness estimates.

Despite these constraints, recurring ideas across P1, T1, and the student accounts give the archival case interpretive coherence. The most transferable insight is conditional: comparable schools may find ukulele ensemble learning educationally meaningful when structured engagement, peer interdependence, local cultural connection, and equitable access are deliberately combined. Transferability depends on contextual similarity and should be assessed by readers using information about institutional purpose, resource constraints, and participant roles; statistical generalization is not warranted.

Future research should test the provisional model prospectively through multisite, longitudinal, and mixed-method designs. Studies should document sampling and consent, include participants and non-participants, collect repeated rehearsal observations, retain verbatim transcripts, and examine helping, exclusion, emotional recovery, disagreement, and role distribution. Pre–post measures and comparison activities could assess whether any change is music-specific, while interviews with parents, community musicians, and policymakers could clarify cultural meaning, authenticity, affordability, and sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This secondary qualitative reanalysis examined how school actors associated ukulele ensemble learning with peace-loving character and how they described the conditions surrounding participation. The archival accounts linked the activity with disciplined and constructive engagement, emotional calm, cooperation, peer assistance, non-discrimination, local cultural belonging, and instrument sharing, while also identifying unequal access as a persistent constraint. The principal contribution is a provisional pedagogical-ecology model in which structured rehearsal, teacher framing, ensemble interdependence, local meaning, and participatory justice interact; the model is an interpretive proposition rather than evidence of causal effectiveness. Schools may use it to design and evaluate locally situated ensemble programs, particularly by making cooperative norms explicit and ensuring equitable instrument access. Prospective research with documented ethics procedures, wider sampling, direct observation, raw-data transparency, comparison activities, and longitudinal follow-up is required to test the durability, transfer, and behavioral significance of these perceived processes.

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